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**Sent:** Wednesday, April 27, 2022 1:36 PM  
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**Subject:** [External] follow up to yesterday's testimony

[External]

Dear Senate Education Committee members,

I appreciate having the time to speak to you yesterday, and I wanted to follow up to clarify some of what I said yesterday. You asked what it was that I hoped to see in three years' time should this go through. I think my response to this question wasn't quite clear and its this that I want to clarify.

I think that an addition of a faculty or staff member as a trustee makes good policy sense, because I think that the Board of Trustees has a fairly narrow understanding of what happens on campus largely filtered through the administration. Having a member who works on campus but separate from the administration would provide the Board with a better understanding of conditions on campus. The faculty and staff perspectives should not replace administration perspective but should be included along with it.

I struggled to answer the question a bit because I do not view the addition of a faculty/staff board member as a magic bullet to solve the challenges that UVM faces. It's one voice. Including that voice though might make less likely the proposals from last year both about reorganization and to the elimination of programs in the College of Arts and Sciences that caused so much uproar on campus; they might make the administration negotiate in slightly different ways with the faculty and staff unions. From my view, this is not about blowing up the institution, it is enabling the governance bodies to work more effectively.

Faculty and staff do have avenues to communicate with the Board (as both Chair Lumbra and I mentioned). But these are limited and indeed the matter that I discussed with the Executive Committee about the changes to the Physics Department can also be read as a case in point. I did have the chance to share with the Board the concerns that faculty have about the impact of the budget model, but this was an extraordinary circumstance and it should not take an extraordinary circumstance for the Board to have an understanding of the impact of the budget model and process.

I have a good deal of respect for the administration and the Board of Trustees, the challenges that they face in running UVM and the work they put into it. However, faculty and staff are important stakeholder in the University and we share governance with them, and it is appropriate that we have a representative on the Board of Trustees.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

Best,  
Thomas Borchert

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